

Neighborhood Visual Survey Workshops

Much of Santa Barbara's neighborhood images have resulted from land development controls which have been enacted. Therefore, the ultimate goal of the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance Update is to define how these controls should be restructured in order to reflect the preferences and expectations of the community. In order to understand the preferences and expectations of the community, a special Neighborhood Visual Survey Workshop series is proposed.

What is a Neighborhood Visual Survey (NVS) Workshop? The NVS Survey Workshop is a special Santa Barbara workshop program designed by RRM. The idea for the workshops is derived from The Visual Preference Survey™ (VPS), a community design participation tool designed by Anton Neleson. In the original version of this tool, citizens viewed paired images of different built environments and then indicated a preference by ranking each image. The VPS is usually administered to groups of 100 to 300 people. After respondents make their choices, survey results are traditionally tabulated quickly and reviewed by the end of a workshop session. A strong consensus typically develops in the workshops. The workshop results inform community planning efforts and foster a sense of "ownership" in the community regarding preferred design guidelines.

How will the NVS Workshop be conducted? RRM will facilitate a fun and interactive workshop for a large group, that will give Santa Barbara City participants the opportunity to share their preferences regarding single family residential design. Using information and images gathered by City staff on past submittals in Santa Barbara "Case Studies", combined with images and illustrations gathered by RRM, RRM will introduce design concepts to the community members, conduct a visual preference survey and then lead a discussion of the survey with the participants. The survey will elicit positive and negative responses to a variety of different design situations relevant to issues and concerns in Santa Barbara single-family neighborhoods including: massing, setbacks, building height, and scale. The exact format of the survey will be defined with staff at the onset of the project, but will include:

- a. 75-100 general slides depicting various massing, garage treatments, FAR ranges, setbacks, etc. and
- b. Case studies of single-family projects in Santa Barbara with typical neighborhood statistical information

Why are the Workshops Planned? The purpose of the workshops is to garner significant public input into the NPO Ordinance Update process. The results of the NVS Survey will guide staff in identifying initial issues of most concern to neighborhoods, and help staff begin to discern community preferred design solutions. For example, if photographs with generous second floor setbacks are rated highly in workshops, then options for regulating second floor setbacks would have further consideration. Alternatively, if photographs of another design technique do not receive high ratings, staff will be less likely to focus analysis on that particular design technique. Also, the workshops will serve as a way to

introduce significant design concepts to community members so that they can effectively comment on the Single Family Design Guidelines as they are being reviewed by various City committees.

Additional Specific Neighborhood Preference Information Gathering.

Ideally, the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance Update may also provide some insight into various individual neighborhood preferences. The different lot conditions, siting and architectural styles of each neighborhood might indicate a desire for slightly different design regulations by neighborhood. Although the NPO Update scope does not include neighborhood-specific design guidelines, the NVS survey workshops could begin to establish neighborhood design preference which can be useful during review of several projects in a neighborhood and in future planning efforts. Individual neighborhood workshops can also provide an opportunity for neighborhoods to express any requests regarding potentially establishing preferred architectural style ranges for some neighborhoods.

Initial Community-Wide Workshop. The initial NVS survey workshop is planned for late February, approximately five weeks after the anticipated RRM contract authorization. The first workshop is expected to attract 100 to 200 participants. There will be proactive outreach for this workshop through the following methods:

- Postcards sent to interested parties
- Newspaper display ads
- GATV announcement
- Announcements at various hearing bodies
- City website announcement
- Color flyers sent to all homeowners' groups
- Email announcement
- Pro-active press releases
- Potential radio spot

Six Follow-Up Neighborhood Workshops. The initial workshop presentation will include informational slides at the end of the presentation to introduce six follow-up neighborhood workshops. The follow-up workshops will be conducted solely by staff at six different neighborhood workshops grouped as follows:

Upper East and Downtown: Oak Park, Upper East, Laguna, Downtown

Eastside & Westside: Eastside, Lower East, Westside, West Downtown, Lower West, West Beach, & Lower State

(Although there is little single family development in these neighborhoods, this session also includes Waterfront, East Beach, Coast Village & Milpas.)

Mesa: East Mesa, West Mesa

Northside & San Roque: San Roque, East San Roque, Hitchcock, Samarkand, North State, Hidden Valley

Riviera/Campanil/Braemar (Hillside Areas): Lower Riviera, Riviera, Cielito, Eucalyptus Hill, Bel Air, Campanil, Las Positas, Alta Mesa, Foothill

Additional Workshop: tbd

The follow-up workshops will occur in coordination with homeowner's and neighborhood associations, from March through May 2004. Verbal translation to Spanish is anticipated for the Westside & Eastside Neighborhood Workshop.

Summary. The NVS Survey Workshops are a key component of the NPO Update process because they will involve the public in providing design guideline input and initial research direction. Also, RRM's special expertise in conducting these special workshops is essential for effective public participation of this kind. The initial NVS Workshop and limited assistance with subsequent workshops constitutes approximately one-third of the consultant budget, or \$12,260.